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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [LA](#)

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY  
REPORT - PART I - LAOS

REF: STATE 136782

1.(U) As requested by the Department's telegram under reference, this message transmits Embassy Vientiane's draft of part I of the 2007-2008 INCSR for Laos. As noted para 7 reftel, advance in the due date for this report to November 5 has made it impractical for post to obtain and include complete statistics from the host government for such activities as drug law enforcement during the year. Post will make every effort to secure the most complete available statistics and transmit them to update this draft no later than February 1, 2008.

12. BEGIN TEXT: LAOS

1I. Summary

Laos made tremendous progress in reducing opium cultivation between 2000 and 2007, and estimates by the USG and UNODC of poppy cultivation in 2007 were at the lowest levels ever. However, the momentum of this effort may be slowing, and gains remain precarious. Thousands of former poppy growers who have yet to receive alternative development assistance create a substantial potential for a renewal of poppy production. Trafficking in illegal drugs and controlled chemicals continues unabated throughout the country. Both awareness programs and treatment capacity targeting abuse of methamphetamines expanded during 2007, but remain insufficient to respond to the very high level of methamphetamine abuse which now affects virtually every socio-economic level of Lao society. Law enforcement capacity is woefully inadequate, and the inability to establish an effective deterrent to regional trafficking organizations makes Laos a transit route of choice for Southeast Asian heroin, amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), and precursor chemicals en route to other nations in the region. The combination of weak law enforcement, a central geographic location, and new highways and river crossings connecting China, Thailand and Vietnam will be likely to exacerbate this already troubling transit situation. Laos became party to the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Drugs in 2004.

II. Status of Country

In 2007, the Government of Laos continued its battle to eliminate cultivation of opium, with continuing but diminishing assistance from international donors. Donors largely sought primarily to alleviate rural poverty, and derivatively to reduce cultivation of illegal drugs. High unprocessed opium prices, driven by a reduction in supply and a remaining population of opium addicts estimated at 8-10,000 or more, frustrated efforts to completely end poppy cultivation. Inhabitants of many villages in former opium growing regions face increasingly desperate circumstances.

Many former poppy growers, finding themselves without assistance they were told they could expect, face severe food security problems. These circumstances create significant incentives for resumption of poppy cultivation by growers and communities that had abandoned it. Only the provision of adequate medium- to long-term agricultural and economic assistance will enable the Laotian authorities to completely and sustainably eliminate opium cultivation.

Methamphetamine and similar stimulants constitute the greatest current drug abuse problem in Laos. The abuse of methamphetamines, once confined primarily to urban youth, is becoming more common among agricultural workers in highland areas, and has had some visible impact on virtually every socio-economic group in Laos. The scope of this problem has overwhelmed the country's limited capacities to enforce laws against sale and abuse of illegal drugs, and to provide effective treatment to addicts. Methamphetamine in Laos is largely consumed in tablet form, but drug abuse treatment centers report admission of a growing number of users of injected amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS). Continued emphasis on drug abuse prevention through comprehensive drug awareness programs, and greatly increased capacity to provide effective treatment to addicts, are both essential to control the growth in domestic demand for ATS.

Heroin abuse in Laos, once limited to foreign workers and tourists, has emerged as a potentially serious problem in highland areas bordering Vietnam. Injected heroin is replacing smoked opium as the preferred method for illegal drug abuse in some ethnic minority communities, bringing with it an attendant potential for increased transmission of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis or other blood-borne diseases. The Laotian government is working to develop a treatment capacity to address this new problem, but at present, there is only

one facility in Laos which has a capability marginally to address the problem of heroin abuse.

Laos occupies a strategic geographic position in the center of mainland Southeast Asia. It contends with long, remote and geographically difficult borders which are very difficult to effectively control. Illicit drugs produced in Burma and precursor chemicals diverted from China are trafficked through landlocked Laos to Thailand and Vietnam, and from major ports in those countries to other nations in the region. Recently completed sections of the Kunming-Bangkok Highway in northwestern Laos, and the Danang-Bangkok Highway in southern Laos, have further aggravated this problem, as new high-speed truck routes overwhelm limited existing border control capacity. Enhanced law enforcement and border control, and more effective regional cooperation, could assist in ameliorating this problem, but will require substantial investment in Laos and its neighboring countries.

Laos has become a significant transit area for illegal drugs and controlled precursor chemicals being trafficked by multinational criminal organizations throughout the region.

### III. Country Actions against Drugs in 2007

**Policy Initiatives.** Laos did not introduce any significant new drug control policy initiatives in 2007. The Lao government instead emphasized implementing existing policies, including its policy commitment to complete elimination of opium cultivation, and on securing sufficient support from international donors to make drug control policies effective in practice.

**Law Enforcement Efforts.** Laos' law enforcement and criminal justice institutions remain inadequate to deal effectively with the problems created by domestic sale and abuse of illegal drugs and international trafficking in drugs, chemical precursors and other contraband. Laos does not currently possess means to accurately assess the extent of production, transit or distribution of ATS or its precursors.

There has been an increase in reported seizures of ATS moving in transit through Laos to neighboring countries. Methamphetamine addiction and related crime in Laos have

grown rapidly.

Laos' principal narcotics law enforcement offices are Counter Narcotics Units (CNU's), the first of which was created in 1994 and which now exist as elements of provincial police in most provinces. The CNU's, however, remain generally understaffed, poorly equipped, and with personnel inadequately trained and experienced to deal with the drug law enforcement environment in Laos. CNU's in most provinces generally number fewer than 15 officers, who are responsible for patrolling thousands of square kilometers of rugged rural terrain. This limited law enforcement presence in rural areas creates an obvious vulnerability to establishment of clandestine drug production or processing activities by regional organizations seeking new locations, although it cannot be confirmed that this has yet actually happened. Assistance provided by the USG, UNODC, South Korea and China has mitigated equipment and training deficiencies to some extent, but prosecutions that do occur almost exclusively involve street-level drug pushers or low-level couriers. As in many developing countries, Lao drug enforcement and criminal justice institutions have demonstrated a continuing serious inability to investigate and develop prosecutable cases against significant drug traffickers without external assistance, and Lao authorities have generally pursued such major cases only under international pressure. Laos is preparing new criminal laws that would provide an enhanced legal basis for seizure of illegal assets. At present, prosecutors lack legal means to pursue assets of convicted drug traffickers unless such assets were the instruments of the drug trafficking offense. Extrajudicial asset seizures reportedly may occur in some cases.

Laos did not make significant progress in disrupting domestic distribution of illegal drugs in 2007. There is no reliable estimate of illegal sales on a national basis, but secondary information, such as increasing property crime, the emergence of youth gangs, growing methamphetamine addiction and the emergence of heroin addiction among Lao and ethnic minority groups, all suggest that trafficking in drugs for internal sale and abuse in Laos is increasing. Individuals or small-scale merchants undertake the majority of street-level methamphetamine sales. Criminal gangs involved in drug trafficking across the Lao-Vietnamese border, especially gangs that involve ethnic minority groups represented on both sides of the border, constitute a particular problem for Lao law enforcement. Such cross-border gangs now reportedly play a leading role in the significant expansion of injected

heroin use in northern Laos, and in the cultivation of marijuana for export in the central province of Bolikhamxai.

Opium distribution is now relatively limited. Net production within Laos has diminished below estimated consumption levels, making Laos now probably a net importer of unprocessed opium. The majority of opium addicts still reside in households or villages that produce, or used to produce, opium poppy. There is some opium distribution between villages, especially as remaining opium cultivation is displaced to more distant and remote locations. Despite progress made by the Lao government in reducing the number of opium addicts, Laos continues to suffer from one of the highest opium addiction rates in the world.

Corruption. Corruption in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), long present in many forms, may be increasing as the flow of illicit drugs and precursors in and through Laos grows. Lao civil service pay is inadequate, and persons able to exploit official position to personal advantage, particularly police and customs officials, can augment their salaries through corruption. This is especially true in areas distant from central government oversight. Lao law explicitly prohibits official corruption, and some officials have been removed from office, and/or prosecuted, for corrupt acts. The GOL has made fighting corruption one of its declared policy priorities, and has made serious efforts to do this, but such efforts confront entrenched corruption throughout much of the government bureaucracy. As a matter

of government policy, Laos strongly opposes the illicit production or distribution of narcotic drugs, psychotropic or other controlled substances, and the laundering of the proceeds of illegal drug transactions. No senior official of the Government of Laos is known to engage in, encourage, or facilitate the illicit production or distribution of illegal drugs or substances, or the laundering of proceeds of illegal drug transactions. The Government of Laos signed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption in December 2003, but has not yet ratified that Convention.

Agreements and Treaties. The USG signed initial agreements to provide international narcotics control assistance in Laos in 1990, and has signed further Letters of Agreement (LOAs) to provide additional assistance to projects for Crop Control, Drug Demand Reduction, and Law Enforcement Cooperation annually since then. Laos has no bilateral extradition or mutual legal assistance agreements with the United States. During 2007, Laos delivered no suspects or fugitives on drug offenses to the United States under any formal or informal arrangement.

Laos acceded to the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in December 2004. It has made substantial progress in the control of opium cultivation, production and addiction, but has not yet achieved all objectives of this 1988 UN Convention. Laos is party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, but is not yet party to the 1972 Amending Protocol to the Single Convention. Laos acceded to the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1997.

Laos acceded to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols in 2003, and signed the UN Convention Against Corruption in December 2003 but has not yet ratified it. GOL officials consult frequently with UNODC on narcotics control issues and strategy, and UNODC continues to support a number of crop control, demand reduction and law enforcement programs.

Laos has legal assistance agreements with China, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma and Indonesia. Lao membership in ASEAN and APEC has increased the number of bilateral and multilateral legal exchanges for Laos since 2000, and training programs supported by several international donors are improving the capacity of the Ministry of Justice, police, customs and immigration officials to cooperate with counterparts in other countries. Laos has declared its support for the ASEAN initiative to promote a drug-free region by 2015. Laos has extradition treaties with China, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. The GOL has assisted in the arrest and delivery of individuals to some of those nations, but does not use formal extradition procedures in all cases. Laos has participated in bilateral conferences with Thailand on drug control cooperation, and cooperates with Thailand and UNODC in measures to prevent drug trafficking along the Mekong. Laos has met trilaterally on narcotics issues with Vietnam and Cambodia, and participates in an occasional regional consultative group on drug issues under UNODC auspices which brings together officials from those four countries, Burma and China.

Cultivation/Production. In 2007, Laos again made measurable progress in further reducing opium poppy cultivation. Estimates of poppy cultivation in Laos by the UNODC (1500 hectares, down from 2500 hectares in 2006) and the USG (1100 hectares, down from 1700 hectares in 2006) stood at the lowest level since such estimates were first prepared in the 1980's. The remaining poppy cultivation observed in these surveys was encountered in five northern provinces: Phongsaly, Luang Namtha, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang and Huaphan.

Opium production, as estimated by UNODC, also declined from 2006, from an estimated 20 metric tonnes in 2006 to an estimated 9.2 metric tonnes in 2007. UNODC reported that its survey found a reported average price for opium in Laos of \$974/kilogram, nearly double the \$550/kilogram reported in 2006. With the decline in estimated production and increasing price, UNODC estimates that Laos has now become a

net importer of opium to supply its remaining population of opium addicts. (USG survey estimate for opium production not available to NAS Vientiane when INCSR initial draft was prepared; INL please insert and correct narrative if necessary.)

Most opium produced in Laos is consumed domestically in northern border areas, where raw and cooked opium is smoked or eaten. The share of the opium product in Laos at this time that is refined into heroin is thought to be very small or nonexistent. Sustained high farm prices in growing areas suggest that the supply of available opium is decreasing more rapidly than the demand. Reportedly, increased prices for opium were one of the factors that led to a notable spread in injected heroin abuse among ethnic minority groups resident in poppy-growing border areas during 2007.

The USG Crop Control projects implemented in Laos from 1990 to date have not employed chemical herbicides or any other form of compulsory eradication of opium poppy. The Embassy has received some reports, particularly in recent years, that some compulsory eradication of opium poppy has been employed in some localities, at the discretion of local officials. Within the areas of the Lao-American Projects for opium poppy reduction in Houaphan, Phongsaly and Luang Prabang, growers themselves, or officials of their villages, carried out eradication of poppy as a condition of written agreements between villages and GOL authorities that villages would cease production of opium. In recent years, and particularly since it declared Laos to be formally opium-free in 2006 (a policy assertion it justifies by arguing that net eradication which GOL officials carry out reduces harvestable cultivation to insignificant levels), the GOL has stated that it may employ compulsory poppy eradication in selected areas where alternative development programs are not available, or have not by themselves sufficed to reduce and eliminate poppy cultivation. The GOL reported to UNODC that its officials eradicated a total of 779 hectares of poppy in 2007.

Despite the positive results of the 2007 opium crop survey, the UNODC Resident Representative in Laos noted in announcing those results that the situation of the farm population that has depended primarily or exclusively on poppy cultivation remains "precarious" and that "the current reduction in cultivation is dependent on the existence and creation of appropriate and sustainable livelihood opportunities." However, UNODC reports that international donor support for such alternative development programs continues to diminish. UNODC has reported that many former opium growers survived the loss of income from opium only by consuming their savings, generally in the form of livestock. Such savings, where they existed, are now depleted. The Embassy has received frequent reports from the World Food Program of serious food security concerns among rural populations, but the WFP and other donors also report diminishing international resources available for food security assistance. Villages and farming groups who stopped growing poppy because they believed promises from their government or international donors of support for alternative livelihoods find promises without prospects an indigestible meal. Continued diminution in medium-term international support for alternative livelihoods among populations previously dependent on poppy cultivation creates a substantial continuing risk that 2008 and future years will be characterized by resumption of poppy cultivation by farm populations that correctly perceive no other remaining alternative but to starve.

After several years in which cannabis cultivation and reported seizures diminished, there now again appears to be substantial "contract" cannabis production in central Laos, as evidenced by significant recent seizures in that region. Continuing use of cannabis as a traditional food seasoning in some localities complicates attempts to eradicate this crop.

Drug Flow/Transit. Laos' highly porous borders are dominated by the Mekong River and remote mountainous regions. This terrain is notoriously difficult to control, and is permeable

to trafficking of illicit drugs or other contraband, although there are no reliable estimates of the possible volume of such flows. An increase in the number and size of seizures in neighboring countries of drugs that reportedly passed in transit through Laos suggests an increasing transit problem. Illegal drug flows include methamphetamine, heroin, marijuana and precursor chemicals destined for other countries in the region, as well as methamphetamine and other drugs to be distributed and sold for consumption in Laos. Illicit drugs that have been reported found in transit to the United States have included very limited quantities of unrefined opium and local formulations of methamphetamine.

New regional transportation infrastructure, trade agreements, and special economic zones intended to facilitate regional trade and development may inadvertently also benefit transnational criminal trafficking organizations. The opening of two new transit arteries in Southeast Asia that pass through Laos, one a continuous paved highway running from Da Nang in central Vietnam to Bangkok, and another from Kunming, China to Bangkok, have greatly complicated the already difficult challenge posed by illicit transit of drugs or other contraband for Lao law enforcement and border control agencies. Truck-borne cargo containers transit Laos from the Chinese border at Boten to the Thai border at Houayxai in six hours, and the trip from Lao Bao, Vietnam, through southern Laos to Mukdahan, Thailand takes only four hours. There are also indications of continued drug and chemical smuggling on the Mekong River. Laos is not a principal destination for the majority of cargo that transits its territory, but the volume of traffic overwhelms Laos' limited capacity for border control, and becomes a continuing problem for Laos' geographic neighbors.

In addition to increased volume, new bilateral and regional trade agreements will also probably result in proportionally fewer cargo inspections and a greater reliance on intelligence to identify suspect shipments of drugs or other contraband. Laos, which has very limited capabilities of this nature, will have to rely substantially on regional cooperation with its neighbors to effectively impede trafficking in illegal drugs or other contraband. While clearly beneficial for legitimate trade, the potential for abuse of these developing arrangements for illicit trafficking in drugs or other contraband is considerable. Illicit trafficking in drugs may also be growing on less developed routes; there have been unconfirmed reports that heroin destined for southern Vietnam may now be moving along sections of the former Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos.

There is no reliable information on the transportation or financing of illicit drugs in Laos. Transit costs are low, and anecdotal evidence suggests that some trafficking organizations formerly involved with opium may now be shifting to moving and marketing methamphetamine, which is easier to move and has a growing market in Laos. There have been some reports that individuals or organizations that traffic in drugs are also involved in legitimate businesses.

Domestic Programs. Laos made limited advances during 2007 in reducing the demand for and consumption of illicit drugs. The most significant single new development was the opening of a new 100-bed drug addiction treatment facility in Udomxai Province, built with funds from China. Brunei funded construction of two smaller drug abuse treatment facilities in Sayabouri, which opened in January 2007. The United States supported the renovation of the women's rehabilitation facility at the Somsagna treatment center on the outskirts of Vientiane, which can house up to 64 female patients. The U.S. is also preparing to finance construction of a new smaller center in Vientiane Province about 70 kilometers from the capital, which is scheduled for completion in 2008. Despite this augmentation of Laos' treatment capacity, the capacity of existing facilities remains well short of even the most optimistic estimates of the numbers in Laos addicted to methamphetamine or other illegal drugs. Available evidence suggests that many untreated addicts turn to other crime as a means to support their addiction. Most existing

treatment facilities are notably deficient in staff proficiency and effective vocational training. The national treatment center at Somsagna has reported guardedly hopeful results, but limited marketable post-release skills have left many addicts treated at other facilities vulnerable to recidivism. The U.S. is providing assistance to treatment facilities throughout Laos to enhance their capabilities to offer effective post-release vocational preparation. In

2008, the GOL will undertake a new nationwide drug awareness program and media campaign with U.S. support.

Estimates by the GOL in 2007 indicate that the number of remaining opium addicts has stabilized at approximately 8000, after years of steady decline. However, many opium addicts may remain unreported, either because they reside in extremely remote areas, or because they wish to conceal their addiction, or both. Significant impediments to the effective treatment of all opium addicts include the ill health of many elderly opium users, the isolated location of some addict populations, and the lack of sufficient rural health care infrastructure to displace traditional medicinal use of illegal opium, which often serves as the entrance to addiction. Detoxification of opium addicts will probably become increasingly difficult as their numbers diminish, since those remaining are likely to be the most resistant to treatment. There are currently no verifiable statistics on post-detoxification recidivism, and follow-on rehabilitation is scanty. Moreover, during 2007 a disturbing new development became visible as a significant number of former opium users among ethnic minorities living on the border with Vietnam reported having turned from opium to abuse of injected heroin. The GOL hopes to ultimately treat all remaining opium addicts, since ending opium addiction and thus eliminating the market for domestic consumption of opium is critical to complete and sustainable elimination of cultivation of opium poppy.

#### IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

Policy Initiatives. The United States continues to be a substantial, albeit diminished, donor of drug control assistance to Laos, although other donors (primarily European but now including some other Asian countries as well) have become the largest remaining contributors to alternative development programs for opium poppy crop reduction. The Lao-American Opium Crop Control Projects in Phongsaly and Luang Prabang Provinces, which delivered integrated rural development assistance to reduce poppy cultivation, were dissolved in December 2007. The limited remaining assistance in the USG Crop Control project will in 2008 be delivered to more direct and limited village-based alternative livelihood programs, designed to provide assistance to hundreds of former opium growing communities that have not yet received such assistance. The U.S. cooperates closely with international organizations such as UNODC and the World Food Program in areas where serious economic distress in farming communities makes resumption of opium cultivation a continuing significant possibility.

Bilateral Cooperation. Since U.S. drug control assistance to Laos began in 1990, the U.S. has provided somewhat over \$38-million, which has been employed primarily to support the successful, multi-year effort that has reduced poppy cultivation in Laos to a historically low level. During 2007, with the established Lao-American Projects at a reduced level of activity, the NAS in Vientiane cooperated closely in Crop Control and Demand Reduction projects with the Programme Facilitation Unit (PFU), an element of the Lao National Commission on Drug Control and Supervision primarily responsible for implementing alternative development and opium addict detoxification. U.S. funds for drug demand reduction activities support enhancements to methamphetamine abuse treatment centers including vocational training, and a variety of national drug awareness and prevention programs. Limited U.S. law enforcement assistance funds support very limited operational costs, training and equipment for Counter Narcotics Units (CNU's) and the Lao Customs Department.



These limited funds are complemented by continuing regular Lao participation in regional training opportunities offered by the U.S. and Thailand at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok. Bilateral cooperation in drug law enforcement improved somewhat in 2007, with DEA receiving drug samples from the GOL for the first time since 2005.

The Road Ahead. Laos' two-decade effort to sustainably eliminate opium poppy cultivation has reached an advanced stage, but as noted by GOL, UNODC and third country officials -- and large numbers of Lao farmers -- it is by no means over. If significant near-term emergency food security support, and medium- to long-term assistance to establish viable alternative livelihoods, is not delivered in 2008 and the coming few years, it is very probable that the decline in poppy cultivation observed in 2007 will be the last for many years. If former poppy growers revert to opium cultivation, persuading them a second time to stop will be far more difficult.

Laos does not have the law enforcement and criminal justice capabilities and resources necessary to prevent large-scale trafficking of methamphetamine and other illicit drugs and contraband through Laos, nor the distribution, sale and abuse of illegal drugs among the Lao people. For this reason, the GOL will be compelled to rely for its immediate future on drug demand reduction measures for drug abuse prevention and treatment to respond to its epidemic of illegal drug abuse. Existing programs to educate youth and other vulnerable groups on the dangers of addiction must be enlarged and reinforced, and drug abuse treatment availability must be greatly further enhanced. Better Lao integration in regional anti-trafficking initiatives, and a substantially enhanced investment in law enforcement and criminal justice institutions, are essential for Laos to respond effectively to regional and international trafficking and organized crime.

#### IV. Statistical Tables

(As noted above, post will provide best available information to update statistical tables for Laos as soon as possible after the end of 2007, and in any case before the INL deadline of February 1, 2008.)

#### VI. Chemical Control Issues

As party to the 1988 UN Convention, Laos is obliged to establish controls on the 23 precursor and essential chemicals identified under Article 12 of that Convention. In practice, Laos' laws to implement this obligation are weak, and the institutional capability of its government to implement those laws is highly limited. Responsibility for regulating precursor and essential chemicals lies with the Food and Drug Administration of the Ministry of Public Health. In January 2005, that agency issued a decree imposing legal controls on 35 chemicals, including all of those which the 1988 Convention requires be subject to regulation. The Health Ministry is also responsible to issue licenses for the legal importation of very limited quantities of pseudoephedrine or ephedrine which are used (by government-owned pharmaceutical plants) for preparation of cold medications, which are available for sale in pharmacies without prescription. (The Ministry is currently considering, but has not yet approved, one application for importation of 25 kilograms of pseudoephedrine by a GOL-owned pharmaceutical plant.) Initially, officials of the Food and Drug office were assigned at major international entry points to Laos, but due to shortage of personnel and conflicting requirements, the Health Ministry withdrew these staff members and now conducts inspections of imported chemicals only upon request to visit an importer's warehouse or storage facility. The Ministry is not known to conduct any end-use inspection of any licensed imports or uses. There are no other known significant licit imports of precursor chemicals, and no known domestic manufacturing capacity for them in Laos.

Responsibility for enforcement of laws that prohibit the



unlicensed importation, sale or use of controlled chemicals rests formally with the Lao Customs Service and the national police. As a practical matter, there appears to be relatively little communication between these law enforcement agencies and the Health Ministry office responsible for regulation. There have been occasional seizures in Laos of controlled chemicals, most frequently ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, but also less frequently of heroin processing chemicals. For the most part, such seized chemicals have been thought to be in transit between China and Burma or Thailand. There has been no recent evidence of any significant manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in Laos, and no recent evidence of heroin processing in the country.

Laos, along with Burma, Cambodia, China, Thailand and Vietnam, has for several years participated in a regional project and action plan sponsored by the UNODC Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, one of whose goals is to enhance the effectiveness of controls on precursor and essential chemicals. Most activities under this project have concentrated on training for law enforcement, border and regulatory officials in the recognition and management of controlled chemicals, and on providing UNODC advice and assistance to improve participating nations' chemical control laws. Since 2004, Laos has participated with Thailand in an arrangement for periodic joint patrolling of one part of the countries' Mekong River border, one of whose stated goals is to deter smuggling of controlled chemicals. It is not known whether these activities have had any positive results.

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